

CITY OF ALAMEDA

Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Lisa Goldman
Acting City Manager

Date: May 3, 2011

Re: Receive a Report and Provide Direction on Boards and Commissions
Restructuring Options

BACKGROUND

Staff recently completed an analysis of all existing Boards and Commissions (B&C) to identify opportunities to improve governance efficiencies. In the first phase of the analysis, staff reviewed all of the organizing language for each body codified in the City Charter and the Alameda Municipal Code (AMC). On April 5, 2011, the City Council adopted an ordinance that standardized the organizing language for each B&C.

In anticipation of declining resources, staff was instructed to perform a second phase of the analysis to evaluate opportunities to reduce staff workload without compromising necessary public services or regulatory functions.

The City has six Boards created by the Charter:

- Civil Service Board
- Historical Advisory Board
- Library Board
- Planning Board
- Public Utilities Board
- Social Service Human Relations Board

The City has ten bodies codified in the AMC:

- Alameda Film Commission
- Commission on Disability Issues
- Economic Development Commission
- Golf Commission
- Housing Commission
- Housing and Building Code Hearing and Appeals Board
- Public Art Commission
- Transportation Commission
- Recreation and Park Commission
- Youth Advisory Commission

DISCUSSION

The League of California Cities (LCC) conducted a survey in June 2010, asking cities, "What are you doing with your boards and commissions in these tough times?" Of the more than 40 cities responding, 20 cities identified efforts they were taking to reduce staff workload. The range of responses included: disbanding and combining bodies, reducing the number of meetings, and reducing membership.

The opportunities for staff workload reduction identified by the LCC survey prompted staff to evaluate, for comparison purposes, the number and types of B&Cs in neighboring cities. Exhibit 1 is a summary of a study conducted of 18 cities, which evaluated the number of B&Cs for each city, how many of these B&Cs are codified in each city's charter (if applicable), and which cities have bodies similar to Alameda's. Only bodies similar in scope to Alameda's were included for comparison purposes. The cities selected for the study included all cities in Alameda County with populations in excess of 50,000, and chartered cities in the greater Bay Area with populations between 50,000 and 150,000.

The results revealed that Alameda has an average number of B&Cs, but has the most number of bodies codified in its City Charter. All of the cities studied have a body that performs planning functions, followed closely by library, social services, recreation, and youth bodies. Alameda is the only city with a body overseeing film activities.

After completing the study of other cities, staff conducted an analysis of options for restructuring to address workload concerns while preserving the City Council's goal of an open and transparent government. Three B&C restructuring strategies were evaluated:

1. Consolidating functions and activities
2. Reducing the number of members
3. Reducing the number of meetings

Consolidation

Several cities responded to the LCC survey, stating they were combining or disbanding B&Cs as a cost and time-saving strategy. Most of the B&Cs identified for consolidation or elimination were prone to infrequent meetings and limited activities, or were bodies that could logically combine activities.

Based on staff's analysis, Alameda has two bodies that are performing functions that could be easily consolidated with another body: the Public Art and Film Commissions. Both bodies confront issues of infrequent meetings, limited activities, and declining membership. The Public Art Commission last met in December 2009, and four of its five seats are vacant. The Film Commission last met in January 2009, and two of its 11 seats are vacant. Staff recommends that the activities of the Public Art Commission be consolidated with the Planning Board (PB), while the activities of the Film Commission

be performed by the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The functions performed by the Public Art and Film Commissions fall within the purview of the PB and EDC, respectively. The recruitment processes for the PB and EDC could be revised to seek candidates with public art and film experience.

Membership Reductions

Currently, the membership composition of the City's B&Cs varies greatly. The City Charter dictates that the Public Utilities Board, the Library Board, and the Historical Advisory Board contain five members, while the PB and Social Services Human Relations Board contain seven members. The membership composition for the bodies codified in the AMC varies from five to as high as 11 members for the Commission on Disability Issues, Film and Youth Advisory Commissions.

There are several benefits and increased efficiencies associated with reducing the number of members of a B&C. The administration of B&C membership would be more efficient; annual vacancies would be easier to manage with less recruitment and mid-term resignations would most likely decline. In general, there would also be less work with fewer members; such as less tracking, fewer people to provide ethics training for, fewer Statement of Economic Interest forms (Form 700s) to ensure are completed, quicker meetings, and shorter minutes. Based on staff's analysis, several of the bodies codified in the AMC could have their membership numbers reduced, including:

- Commission on Disability Issues: (from 11 to 7)
- Economic Development Commission: (from 9 to 5)
- Recreation and Park Commission: (from 7 to 5)
- Transportation Commission: (from 7 to 5)
- Youth Advisory Commission: (from 11 to 7)

Based on feedback from the secretaries, staff believes that the Economic Development, Recreation, and Transportation Commissions could continue to meet prescribed duties if membership were reduced to five. Seven members are recommended for the Commission on Disability Issues and the Youth Advisory Commission to mitigate the impact upon each of the bodies of reducing the membership from 11 members. The reduction of members can be accomplished in several ways: the City could request volunteers, conduct a lottery, and rely on attrition, among other options. Most of these mechanisms have been used in the past.

Meeting Reductions

A reduced meeting schedule was another popular strategy identified in the LCC survey due to the workload savings that can be attained. Many bodies have regular meeting schedules that require significant staff time to prepare for, in addition to the time spent at the meetings. Often times, bodies maintain their regular, typical monthly meeting schedules, regardless of the actual need to meet. Commitment to the mission of the

B&C and desire to be ready in case a need arises are often cited as the reason for maintaining regular meeting schedules in spite of actual needs.

B&C staff secretaries were asked to estimate the amount of staff time typically spent to support their respective B&C and whether or not their body could accommodate a reduced meeting schedule. Staff secretaries from seven bodies indicated that meeting schedules could be reduced without compromising public services or regulatory functions.

Exhibit 2 is an estimate of the amount of staff time that could be saved by reducing the number of meetings as recommended by the staff secretaries, with the caveat that special meetings could be called if the need for additional meetings arose. Based on staff's analysis, over 900 hours, or approximately 26 weeks of staff time, could be saved by implementing the recommended meeting reductions.

Next Steps

Exhibit 3 is a summary of the recommendations made for all B&Cs. An ordinance is necessary to implement the consolidation of the Film and Public Art activities and to reduce the number of commission members. Since B&C meeting schedules are not codified in the Charter or AMC (except for the Historical Advisory Board), revising the meeting schedules of the bodies identified can easily be accomplished through City Council resolution or some other mechanism.

Additionally, it would be beneficial for membership and appointment purposes to begin implementing changes by the start of the new fiscal year, which begins on July 1. Staff could bring back the introduction of an ordinance at the June 7th meeting, based on feedback from this evening's meeting, and assuming there were no changes, the second reading could occur on June 21st.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact associated with providing policy direction to staff on B&C restructuring. Existing resources in the City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, and City Clerk's Office will be sufficient to enable staff to draft an ordinance and implement changes based on the City Council's direction. The implementation of staff's recommended changes to the B&Cs could increase staff resources available to provide other City services and programs.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a report and provide direction on Boards and Commissions restructuring options.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri Wright", with a stylized, cursive script.

Terri Wright
Senior Management Analyst

Exhibits:

1. Other Cities Study
2. Summary of Potential Savings of Staff Hours
3. Summary of Staff Recommendations

Other Cities Study

Exhibit 1

City	County	Population	Year Incorp.	City Type	# of Chartered Bodies	# of Other Bodies	Planning	Library	Social Services	Rec & Parks	Youth	Public Art	Civil Service	Historical Advisory	Economic Dev't	Housing	Transportation	Disability	Public Utilities	Housing Appeal	Golf	Film
Alameda	Alameda	74,015	1854	Charter	6	10	16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Berkeley	Alameda	106,498	1878	Charter	0	44	44	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BID	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hayward	Alameda	148,935	1894	Charter	2	7	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BID	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fremont	Alameda	213,124	1956	General	NA	14	14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BID	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Livermore	Alameda	83,451	1876	General	NA	11	11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oakland	Alameda	419,095	1852	Charter	0	34	34	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pleasanton	Alameda	69,324	1894	General	NA	10	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
San Leandro	Alameda	81,841	1872	Charter	0	9	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Union City	Alameda	73,269	1959	General	NA	9	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vallejo	Solano	120,108	1867	Charter	0	14	14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Santa Clara*	Santa Clara	105,831	1852	Charter	4	10	14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Richmond	Contra Costa	101,716	1905	Charter	0	22	22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
San Mateo	San Mateo	94,057	1894	Charter	2	8	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Redwood City	San Mateo	76,701	1868	Charter	2	11	13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Napa	Napa	74,666	1872	Charter	5	5	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Palo Alto**	Santa Clara	60,835	1894	Charter	0	19	19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
San Rafael	Marin	57,146	1874	Charter	0	10	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BID	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Petaluma	Marin	56,087	1858	Charter	0	13	13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of Cities with Type of Body:							18	15	15	15	14	10	9	9	8	7	5	4	3	4	2	1

16 Average Number of Bodies

* Public Utilities Governance performed by City Council
 ** Planning and Transportation Commission is combined
 BID = Business Improvement District
 BIKE = bike and trails commission

Summary of Potential Savings of Staff Hours

Exhibit 2

Advisory Body	Current Meeting Frequency	Number of Hours Annually			Number of Staff Assisting	Proposed Number of Meetings	Estimated Hours Saved	% of Savings
		Scheduled Meetings	Preparing Meeting Materials	Total Hours				
Library Board	Monthly	66	144	210	2	Quarterly	140	67%
Social Service Human Relations	Monthly	40	100	140	2	6 Times/Yr	70	50%
Commission on Disability Issues	11 Meetings	36	119	155	3	Quarterly	99	64%
Economic Development Commission	Monthly	72	72	144	4	Quarterly	96	67%
Recreation and Park	Monthly	48	72	120	2	Quarterly	80	67%
Transportation Commission	Monthly	126	398	524	6	6 Times/Yr	349	50%
Youth Advisory Commission	Monthly	40	70	110	3	Quarterly	73	67%
				Total Estimated Hours Saved	949			
				Number of Work Weeks Saved	26			

Summary of Staff Recommendations

Exhibit 3

Advisory Body	Recommended Changes		
	Combine Functions	Reduce # of Members	Reduce # of Meetings
Civil Service Board	No	No (Currently At 5)	No (Meets Quarterly)
Historical Advisory Board	No	No (Currently At 5)	No (In Charter: Monthly)
Library Board	No	No (Currently At 5)	Yes (Change to Quarterly)
Planning Board	Add Art Functions	No (7 In Charter)	No
Public Utilities Board	No	No (Currently At 5)	No
Social Service Human Relations Board	No	No (7 In Charter)	Yes (Change to 6 times/yr)
Commission on Disability Issues	No	Yes (11 to 7)	Yes (Change to Quarterly)
Economic Development Commission	Add Film Functions	Yes (9 to 5)	Yes (Change to Quarterly)
Film Commission	Add to EDC	NA	NA
Golf Commission	No	No	No
Housing and Building Code Appeals Board	No	No (Currently At 5)	No (Meets As Needed)
Housing Commission	No	No (State Law Requires 7)	No
Public Art Commission	Add to Planning	NA	NA
Recreation and Parks Commission	No	Yes (7 to 5)	Yes (Change to Quarterly)
Transportation Commission	No	Yes (7 to 5)	Yes (Change to 6 times/yr)
Youth Advisory Commission	No	Yes (11 to 7)	Yes (Change to Quarterly)